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ABSTRACT

Spain's transition from dictatorship to pacific and stable democracy without producing major national convulsions is remarkable in a world where many such attempts have been made and most have failed. Within the context of government reform, this study identifies and examines strengths and weaknesses of the regionalization process in education 10 years after the changes began. The study identifies the special characteristics of Spain's "regional problem"; the creation of 17 regional, decentralized governments intended to resolve that problem; and the forces behind discontinuing the decentralization movement until at least 1990. Data were gathered in Spain over an 8-month period, using a field study methodology. Interviews were conducted with classroom teachers, top Ministry of Education officials, constitutional lawyers, senior politicians, distinguished writers, and regional officials. Results show that 10 years after regionalism began, coordinated educational planning encompassing the Ministry of Education Council and the six Autonomous Communities with delegated authority was nearly nonexistent. Coordinated actions between the six regional systems and the Ministry were noticeably absent. Tensions between regional educational officials in historic communities and the national officials are partly responsible for division of authority problems. Worsening debts though deficit spending have not facilitated agreement. Included are 58 endnotes in Spanish and English. (MLH)

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EDUCATION, DICTATORSHIP AND DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN: AN ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

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ABSTRACT

Education, Dictatorship and Democracy in Spain:
An Analysis of Administrative Reform

The Spanish transition from an iron-fisted dictatorship to a pacific and stable democracy without producing major national convulsions is an accomplishment in a world where many such attempts have been made and most have failed. Within the context of government reform, this study identifies and examines the strengths and weaknesses of the regionalization and decentralization processes in the field of education 10 years after the changes began. The study identifies the special characteristics of the Spanish "regional problem," the creation of 17 regional, decentralized governments intended to resolve that problem, and the forces behind the discontinuance of the decentralization movement until at least 1990. Data were gathered over an eight month period in Spain using a field study methodology. Interviews were conducted with educators from the classroom to the top levels of the Ministry of Education, as well as with constitutional lawyers, senior politicians, distinguished writers, and regional officials.

Education, Dictatorship and Democracy in Spain: An Analysis of Administrative Reform

The constitutional lawyer seated in his expansive book-lined office in the center of Madrid identified the political phenomenon as the "miracle of Spain." No one could have predicted the transition of the past 13 thirteen years when considered against the recent past. "Over the last 170 years," Jordi Solé Tura writes, "Spain has known four civil wars, innumerable civilian and military revolts, two overthrows of the monarchy, seven constitutions, two immutable laws, three constitutional drafts which were not promulgated, two long military dictatorships that endured 50 years this century, grave episodes of political terrorism, numerous suspensions of constitutional guarantees, and massive political repression that in some cases, like after the 1936-39 civil war under the Franquist regime, reached frightful proportions."[1] The miracle is that out of this past has emerged a comparatively pacific and stable political democracy without producing grand social, economic or political convulsions.

The objective of this study is to respond to the following general question: ten years after Spain's emergence as a democratic nation how effective has been the reform effort to decentralize and regionalize the system of pre-university public education?

Data for the study were gathered in Spain over an eight month period in 1987. The Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (MEC), or Ministry of Education and Science, cooperated fully allowing me access to people and documents throughout the country. Extensive interviews were conducted with university professors, constitutional lawyers, senior politicians, leading intellectuals, teachers, parents and senior officials in the regions and the MEC. In addition, several thousand pages of published and unpublished documents were reviewed. On site data were gathered in five of the seventeen regions. The methodology employed was similar to that I used during numerous studies of educational reform in Latin America.[2]

Historic Legacies

Modern Spain is a nation of nations: a heterogeneous mosaic of ancient kingdoms, regional cultures, multiple languages, hierarchical socio-economic strata, and diverse political ideologies patched together to form one country. The so-called "regional problem" has roots that run deep in the history of the peninsula. The pronounced geographical terrain to the north (Galicia, Asturias, the Basque Country) and the east (Catalonia, Valencia, hindering easy communication and movement have always nurtured incentives for regional identification and development.

The political geography of Spain during the middle ages (711 to 1492) was dominated by the wars to rid the territory of its Arabic invaders. By the early 11th century there were five Christian realms in Spain, (Castile, Leon, Navarre, Aragon, and Catalonia) allied as Catholics in a common cause, but not yet politically united, warring against the Moors. During the eight centuries of the Reconquest special privileges called fueros were granted to residents of the

kingdoms. "These fueros were cherished as immutable and perpetual and became an integral part of the socio-political fabric of Spanish life."[4] Each new king of a monarchy that included the confederation of several lesser kingdoms and principalities would have to swear to respect the local legal, administrative, financial, and cultural characteristics as well as the fueros of each.[4]

The kingdom of Aragon, comprised roughly of the current provinces of Valencia, Aragon, and Catalonia, liberated itself of the Moors almost 200 years before they were cast out of the entire peninsula. This region consequently focused its energies on developing a commercial empire based on Mediterranean trade.[5]

Similarly, the Basques to the north, who were never conquered by the Moors, found their economic outlet was the sea and their identity more with surrounding nations than with Castile. Both of these territories, with their own languages, economic structures, and fueros developed a strong sense of cultural separateness from the rest of the land that would become Spain.

The political geography of Spain began its final process of consolidation with the marriage (1469) of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón, known as the Catholic Kings. Twenty-three years after their marriage, the Moors were cast out of their last stronghold in Granada. Isabella and Ferdinand ruled as sovereigns over their own kingdoms until the death of Isabella. Ferdinand then ruled the entire territory and the process of consolidation and centralization in Spain began in earnest.

The process of political consolidation through dynastic marriages and wars continued for centuries. The process of consolidation in modern public administration began early in the 19th century shortly

after the War of Independence with France. A Napoleonic model of administration was adopted which created provinces (eventually reaching fifty in number) whose boundaries frequently cut across the lines of the former kingdoms.

Centralization, Beltrán points out, is the key to the Napoleonic model. "There are no autonomous administrative systems, and even local administrations have very little self-government; the administrative hierarchy follows the model of the military hierarchy, which means that the chain-of-command stretches from the central government all the way to the most remote parts of the land." Significantly, the model does away with "special privileges, and brings about an increasing uniformity in the conduct of the administrative system and in the delivery of public services."[6]

The Catholic Church was another major force in the centralization and consolidation of power. Since the Reconquest from the Moors, the Church had unquestioned authority over religious matters and great influence over political affairs of State. "The proposition that the truth is one, that it is already known, sits well with political notions of authority, obedience, tradition, patriotism: the throne and the altar."[7] A principal function of the Church in education was to insure that what was taught did not conflict with the revealed truth. The Concordat of 1851 with the Holy See formally insured just that right and responsibility.

In contrast, Liberals and Republicans took great exception to the idea of a revealed truth and argued for the ideals of freedom of thought and speech as well as the separation of Church and State. Education was to be open to the marketplace of ideas as well as open to all classes of society.[8]

The Spanish Army was another major force in the continuing effort to consolidate power. Following the loss of its last colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in the Spanish American War of 1898, the colonial army returned to Spain. The crisis of morale in the military was profound and without external enemies it turned to maintaining public order for its new mission, especially in the Basque and Catalonian regions. In 1923 General Miguel Primo de Rivera executed a coup d'état, abolished the Constitution, situated Alfonso XIII as a figurehead of state and ruled as dictator for the next 10 years.

In sum, conflicting forces stemming from historic legacies converged on 20th century Spain. The centrifugal forces demanding regional centers of power based on the boundaries, languages, cultures and fueros of the ancient kingdoms clashed with the centripetal forces of the Monarchy, Catholic Church and the Army demanding the consolidation of power at the center.

Internal pressures built continuously under the Primo de Rivera dictatorship leading up to the Second Republic (1931-36) when well-meaning liberal politicians gained control of the government and initiated a devolution of power to the historic territories of Catalonia (1932) and three Basque provinces (1936). The politicians of the Second Republic struggled to contain the "opposing forces of fascism and socialism, liberalism and clericalism, centralism and regionalism, but failed in their bold efforts to implant democracy."[9] The caldron of opposing forces exploded into the Spanish civil war (1936-39) and resulted in forty more years of military dictatorship.

Franco, the Historic Territories and Education

With the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War, General

Francisco Franco, the former Commanding General of the Canarias Santa Cruz de Teneriffe, became "Chief of State, Generalisimo of the Army, and by the Grace of God, Caudillo [maximum leader] of Spain and the Crusade." He had become the Caudillo, by the "Grace of God" and therefore was responsible only to "God and History." The values of his regime embodied obedience to authority, the Catholic Church, patriotism, family unity, political conservatism, anti-unionism and anti-Communism.

The history of the Franco regime is, fundamentally, the study of executive power. Power which incorporated the three classical branches of gowernment in the hands of one person.[10] A tightly controlled, centralized command structure was maintained and reinforced by making at the top all political appointments from local town mayors to provincial governors, heads of ministries and heads of government. In education, similar centralized controls were maintained through a series of governing boards at the university, provincial and local levels which were chaired by politically appointed officials.[11]

With the Nationalist victory, democracy, political and cultural pluralism, and all vestiges of regional autonomy were suppressed -- except in Navarra and Alava which had supported the rebellion. Gunther writes:

> Regional elective bodies were dissolved, and local administrative functions were transferred to the central State Administration. The Basque and Catalán languages were banned from schools, from the administration and from newspapers. Some poetry and novels in Catalán were tolerated, but Basque literature was not. Basque names were forcibly Castilianized, and even Basque tombstones were scraped clean."[12]

Franco's army treated the Basque territory and Catalonia like

occupied lands. The attempt to stamp out regional cultural identities went far beyond the prohibition of languages other than Spanish. It included the prohibition of folkloric celebrations, showing their flags and even singing local hymns.

Franco was, of course, trying to create a sense of loyalty to the State and behind that his political machine, the National Movement. Donaghy and Newton observe that:

> What Franco forgot, however, while extolling the virtues of Isabella and Ferdinand and Spain's Golden Age of Empire, was that, during that period, there had been no attempt to impose legal, financial or administrative conformity on the regions of Spain. In the long run, far from suppressing the regional cultures, Franco only succeeded in revitalising them and converting the Basque Country and Catalonia (in particular) into the most determined centres of generalized opposition to his regime. Without any doubt, the birth of the Basque terrorist organisation ETA can be directly attributed to the repressive policies of the regime.[13]

Post Civil War policies of the Franco Regime significantly favored those who had backed his winning side. Roughly, the middle and upper classes represented by the monarchists, political conservatives, the Church, the Army, high ranking civil servants and representatives of financial institutions. The more liberal working and lower middle-class, the regional autonomists, socialists, anticlerics, intellectuals and agricultural workers tended to support the Republicans.

After the Civil War government ministers and senior bureaucrats almost always came from upper- and upper middle-class families.[14] A light tax burden with a regressive tax structure was introduced which served as a reward to the upper income Spaniards. A study reported in Gunther states that the overall tax burden of the lower socio-economic classes was 14.5 percent and the upper class was 9.6 percent.[15]

At approximately the time of Franco's death, Spain was spending

1.8 percent of its Gross National Product on Education which was the lowest in Western Europe by a considerable margin. The European average (including the USSR) was 5.1 percent. The African average was 4.1 percent.[16]

With the Franco regime the Catholic Church again resumed its dominant role in supervising instruction and censoring content. The government used the creation of religious private schools as a means of cutting public funding to education which was the principal avenue of education for the working class that did not support the Nationalist side of the Civil War. In 1931, 28.9 percent of the high school students were in private schools. In 1943 that figure increased to 70.7 percent when democracy arrived, public secondary education again approached 70 percent of the student population.[17]

During the first years of the Franco regime, "education only interested the government as a vehicle for putting across its own ideology."[18] Any "unreliable" teachers were purged and replaced in public schools by members of the Falange. Textbooks repeatedly extolled the themes of God, Franco, family and country as if they embodied the ultimate values of truth, moral wisdom and unity.[19]

The Educational Reform of 1970

In 1970 the General Act on Education and Finance for Educational Reform was passed which represented the first comprehensive overhaul of the Spanish educational system since the Moyano Law of 1857. This reform is interesting because it came five years before the death of Franco, and up until that time the regime had always treated education with benign neglect. This reform, which was the forerunner of the major changes that came with the democratization of Spain, was largely

the result of four converging forces; the first of which was economic.

After World War II Spain, like much of Europe, was physically broken and economically devastated. Ostracized by the victorious Allied nations, it was not invited to participated in the development programs, such as the Marshall Plan, that rebuilt the economies of other war torn European nations. It was not until 1952 that the Spanish economy reached the level of national income it had achieved before the Civil War in 1935.[20] "Between 1939 and 1959, the Spanish people had to pay an enormous price in terms of poverty and oppression because of the autarchical regime."[21]

The economic boom of the 1960's came when Franco began releasing his control over the economic machinery to the more liberal international policies under the direction of technocrats such as those identified with Opus Dei.[22] In addition, the Stabilization Plan of the International Monetary Fund, the military bases agreement with the United States, a rapidly expanding tourist industry, and massive emigration by Spanish workers to other countries where foreign currency could be captured all contributed to the economic takeoff.

The second major force was the growing realization that the inadequacies of the educational system presented major obstacles to providing an adequately trained work force for the growing economy, especially in technical, scientific and managerial areas.[23] In response to growing needs of the economy in general and manpower needs in specific, the educational budget expanded. In 1964 it exceeded 10 percent of the national budget for the first time ever and by 1970 it reached 14.60 percent.[24]

In addition to the antiquated curricular programs and instructional methods, there existed a dual track educational sy[illegible]

which discriminated mostly against children of rural areas by ending their education at 14 years of age while permitting others to go on. "The educational system reached a point where it could no longer function on the basis of its rigid elitist traditions."[25]

The third contributing force can be attributed to the massive outburst of student protests on university campuses. These not only reflected the intensity of public disturbances going on in industrialized nations around the world, but also focused on the bottled up frustrations long brewing in Spain. In 1979 they became so intense a national emergency was declared.

Gunther writes that by this time Franco had withdrawn from the daily affairs of governance and only four basic issues drew his attention: (1) church/state relations, (2) the succession, (3) the Army, and (4) matters of public order. In the case of education, he was willing to accept some changes if it would reestablish order on the university campuses.[26]

The fourth major force was leadership, provided by the timely arrival of a distinguished UNESCO and World Bank educator, Richard Diez Hochleitner who assumed the role of General Technical Secretary of the MEC. The initial step was to develop a thoroughly documented "white paper"[27] which "broke the traditional style of report because for the first time in thirty years the government was rigorously and critically confronted with its own past."[28] The document became a best seller throughout Spain.

The next step was to draft a new education law that was comprehensive in that, among other things, it reformed higher and lower levels of education, encompassed the economic, scientific and technical needs of the country, established a single track that did

not prejudice against the children of rural areas, and revised the curricular programs. The new education law did not, however, make any concessions to the unique educational needs of the historic territories of Spain. In sum, the 1970 law began a process of change that accelerated with the arrival of democracy in the form of a new Constitution in 1978.

The 1978 Constitution and Democracy

The Transition

With the death of Franco in 1975, his chosen successor, Juan Carlos I, had to choose between continuing the autocracy as Franco had planned or redirecting the nation toward a democracy. In the face of considerable odds, he chose the latter. The political struggles for power immediately extended beyond the factions of the traditional ruling class to include the long suppressed left of center liberal movements representing the working class. The historic territories also joined the fray demanding autonomy if not outright independence.

Fears of national disintegration were wide spread. However, several forces worked to hold the country together. (1) The Monarchy became a bridge from the old regime to the new and was central to calming the anxieties of the Army.[29] (2) The idea of democracy was a vote catching concept which caused a move toward the center by politically extreme groups.[30] (3) There were no purges or political vendettas against officials identified with the Franco regime, and the public administration corps "...remained outside the political arena as a purely operational and professional sphere ready to serve the government that came to power in each election no matter which party won."[31]

(4) In 1977, even before the new Constitution was promulgated the

central government issued what could be considered a preemptive strike by issuing provisional pre-autonomy decrees giving special privileges of self-governance to Catalonia and the Basque territory. (5) The UCD party led by Adolfo Suarez did not hold a majority in the parliament, and therefore for the first time in the history of Spain the resulting Constitution was the product of political collaboration, compromise and consensus among all political groups with parliamentary representation."[7] (6) Perhaps the most powerful force holding Spain together during the sometimes turbulent moments of the transition was the collective memory of the Civil War, and the intensity of the desire not to force a political rupture once again."[8]

The transition went quickly and peaceably. The autocratic institutions of Franco were dismantled with the Political Reform Act of 1976, general elections were held in 1977, the newly elected parliament approved a new Constitution in 1978, and new elections were held in 1979. For the first time Spain had a political system elected by the people and basically representative of their socio-economic characteristics.

The Development Dilemma: 1978

The structure of government established was designed to maximize the institutionalization of democracy through the popular election of government representatives and devolve power to the regional level through decentralization. At the time there was, what was generally called, an economic crisis. The GNP had fallen from an annual average of 6.5 percent during the 1965-73 boom years to 2.2 percent in the 1977-79 years[9] and inflation approached 20 Percent.[10] The institutionalization of democracy could have taken place within the context of a centralized structure of government, such as the

contemporary French model, or a devolved, decentralized structure, such as the German model. The development dilemma was, which structure would be most appropriate for Spain?

From the perspective of the modernization of public institutions to support national socio-economic development, Escudero argues that a centralized model would have been more efficient in that it would not be necessary to do the business of managing the nation through various new levels of regional autonomic governments all with their own administrative hierarchies. Even though Franco's infrastructure of centralized government was considered relatively efficient, it tended to be equated with autocratic government and therefore was rejected. If the autonomic, decentralized structure is to be efficient and support modernization and national development, it is critical, Escudero argues, that the regional and central governments plan and work together in the context of close collaboration.[36] [The extent to which this has actually occurred will be pointed out later.]

The Democratic Constitution of 1978

Four major building blocks of change were encompassed in the new Spanish Constitution, all of which are linked to the "regional problem." First: "the geography, history and sense of regional identity were the bases of designing a new regional map of Spain...that was not the result of technical decisions made at the center but as a result of social and political forces at the periphery."[37] The 50 geographical provinces of public administration created in 1833 based on the Napoleonic centralized model were collapsed into 17 so-called Comunidades Autónomous (C.A.) or Autonomous Communities.

In the conventional sense of the term they were neither communities nor autonomous, but rather regions given measured degrees

of self government. Boundaries were created to reunite the area of the historic territories of Galicia, Basque Country and Catalonia, each with its distinct language, culture and traditions. Once again these regions assumed the territorial boundaries of ancient kingdoms and the fueros of power that had been lost over the centuries were to varying degrees recovered.

Most of the Spanish territory had no language other than Spanish and possessed no special historical or cultural uniqueness. These areas were created into artificial regions which required inventions symbolizing uniqueness, such as their own Autonomous Community hymns, flags and coats of arms.[38] Complicating the matter was the fact that the wealthiest sections of Spain fell within the Autonomous Communities of the historic territories.

Because the unitary, centralized form of government was identified with Franco and dictatorial government, national opinion strongly favored a regionalized, decentralized form of government. The second major change in the structure of government was the creation of seventeen democratically elected regional parliaments which, when qualifying through constitutional procedure, would assume a large measure of control over their own territories. Hence, the Constitution found a balance between the unitary form of government historically associated with autocracy and the Federal model which had led to social disruption and political chaos during the First Republic (1873-1974) and fears that it would place the regions beyond control.

The Constitution defined what Beltrán calls a quasi-federal structure of government with defined powers retained by the central government and those devolved to the regional governments.[39] In the division of powers, the Constitution hedges in favor of the State-

The key article reads, "The State holds exclusive jurisdiction over the following matters" (art. 149), and "The Autonomous Communities may assume jurisdiction in respect to the following matters" (art. 148) (emphasis added). This point became important later in the 1980s when a rationale was formed to slow down the division of powers.

The decentralization process would assume a classic configuration. "The central powers determine the general framework of the educational system and the broad strokes of policy and direction. The regional and local powers amplify and fill in the established framework. The local schools and teaching staffs elaborate and execute the resulting program within a considerable margin of autonomy."[40]

Because each Autonomous Community has its own elected parliament, the reins of regional government can, and often do, reside in the hands of different political parties. The various regional sectors, as agriculture, health and education are headed by a consejero, or secretary, who is appointed by the dominant political party in a particular Autonomous Community or through negotiation if a coalition is in control.

Following the identification of 17 regions and the formation of their parliamentary governing bodies, the third major feature of change built into the Constitution was that all the regions did not receive their competencies (decision-making authority with corresponding financial transfers) at the same time. Three separate avenues to the transfer of power established an incremental approach to change.

The "rapid route," intended to bring quickly under the umbrella of the Constitution the three historic territories of Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country which had in the past voted for autonomy

through a referendum; the "slow route," which required favorable action at the provincial and municipal council level and finally at the Cortes (national parliament) prior to beginning a five year delay; and the "exceptional route," for those regions which could demonstrate mass backing for autonomy that included support by three-quarters of the Municipal Councils and all the Provincial Councils of a given region as well as a popular referendum.[41] Six regions qualified under the "fast" and the "exceptional" routes.

An interesting question is, why didn't the government establish Autonomous Communities only in the historic territories where the pressures for some form of self government were long-standing and volatile. Interviews with senior government officials point out that following the death of Franco the national population was caught up in a euphoria that linked the promises of democracy with increased socio-economic development and regionalism. All parts of Spain wanted to share in the pending transformation and the vehicle of change would be the Autonomous Communities.

Those in the central government had a political preoccupation. If only the historic territories were to receive quasi self-rule, then the annual budget struggles and policy battles would pit those aggressive territories against the MEC which represented the rest of Spain. By establishing 17 Autonomous Communities instead of just two or three, the other regional governments would provide a counterweight to the demands of the historic territories. In other words, it would not simply be the historic territories against the government. Decisions would be made in terms of all the Autonomous Communities with equal rights negotiating with the central government and none to receive privileged treatment.

In addition, the Army and the historic territories were old enemies. The government did not want to make the Army nervous by providing special privileges to those regions. Indeed, the attempted coup d'état in February of 1981 which had Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero of the Civil Guard bursting onto the floor of Congress and firing his pistol into the roof failed, but it did have the effect of slowing the regionalization process.

Donaghy and Newton write that "clearly there were political interests at work here determined to ensure that, at least in the short term, full autonomy was to be granted to no more than a privileged few. ...however, in the long term, all the regions would theoretically have the right to attain the same level of autonomy."[42]

The fourth major building block of change was a constitutional mechanism designed to preserve the "one nation" concept, yet at the same time to provide regional political autonomy. "Political autonomy consists of a capacity to take decisions and to implement them on the basis of adequate resources."[43] Providing for "one nation" as well as "political autonomy of the Autonomous Communities" is a creative exercise in the distribution of responsibility. In the area of education, for example, the Constitution reserves for the State a series of responsibilities (competencias) that serve to bind the nation together. For example, the Ministry of Education, as an agency of the State, is the only institution that can grant degrees, and they are valid in all Autonomous Communities.

Also, the Ministry establishes the characteristics of academic cycles (primary, secondary and university preparatory), and the minimum amount of time that must be devoted to teaching a uniform body of knowledge such as the Spanish language and Spanish history. If the

Ministry of Education does not approve of an educational program in a region, it can withhold graduation degrees. To insure compliance, the Constitution provides the State the right to inspect regional educational systems to insure compliance with nationally defined standards.

The Autonomous Communities, upon receipt of their competencias, have the right to establish educational and administrative programs (above the nationally defined mínimos) which emphasize the special historical, cultural, and language characteristics of the regions. Even though the Spanish State, as such, remains monolingual, "territorial bilingualism" in provided for in those regions where another language is spoken, such as Catalonia, Galicia, The Basque Country, the Balearic Islands and Valencia.

Although the 17 Autonomous Communities do not have their own Constitutions, they do have their own Estatutos de Atuonomía, or autonomy statutes that, in effect, substitute for regional constitutions. The differentiation between Autonomous Communities comes through the individually negotiated statutes of autonomy. Thus, in theory it is quite possible for the various regional educational systems of Spain to exhibit notable differences.

In terms of regional governance, a consejero, or secretary of education, manages the educational system and reports to the president of the Autonomous Community legislature. Through negotiated resource transfers from the central government, the Autonomous Communities have the capability of setting their own educational policy and funding it through their own budgeting process. Because some Autonomous Communities are considerably poorer than others, an Inter-Territorial Compensation fund is used by the central government to support capital

expenditures of school construction in the more needy regions.

An important aspect of the Constitution which had significant ramifications for education was the article on freedom of religion.** In establishing a secular State, the Catholic Church lost its special power to inspect and sensor the character and content of education in Spain.

Thus, the Constitution had seen to a significant reconfiguration of power blocks that had driven the educational system for most of the 20th century. No longer was the course of education to be shaped by forces representing the upper socio-economic classes, the Catholic Church and the military as well as a highly centralized bureaucratic structure of government. The Constitution provided for a broad spectrum of socio-economic and political participation, a neutralized Church with the military back in the barracks, and an extensive decentralized system of education taking place within the context of 17 regional governments.

The Ministry of Education and the Regions

In order for the regionalization and decentralization of education to function properly, at least three conditions would have to prevail. (1) a much higher priority toward financing education would need to be assigned than was the case under the Franco government. (2) The Autonomous Communities would have to institutionalize their own organization and management structures to strengthen the quality and quantity of their educational systems. (3) Effective processes of planning and coordination would be required to link the actions of the Ministry of Education and the regional secretariats of education.

The New Education Priority

By 1984 Spain had become the thirteen most economically powe[illegible]l

nation in the world when comparing Gross National Products. [This is not as spectacular as it sounds when considering the fact that the top 10 countries account for 70 percent of the world's combined GNP].[45] The promise of increased educational support under a constitutional democracy came true. At the time of Franco's death in 1975, Spain was spending 1.8 percent of its GNP on education and 13.6 percent of total government expenditures. It should be recalled that these figures were significant improvements over previous years because of the educational reform of 1970. By 1985 Spain was spending 3.3 percent of its GNP and 14.2 percent of its total government expenditures on education. However, even with these impressive improvements Spain still lagged behind its European counterparts that were spending an average of 5.6 percent of their GNP's on education.[46]

[Even with the increase in expenditures, one has cause to wonder if the resources are always spent wisely. At the university level, for example, in 1985-86 60,667 students were studying business economics, 43,416 medicine, 31,531 education and 130,277 were studying law.[47] One can wonder why a country should need four times as many lawyers as teachers.]

Regional Infrastructure

By 1987 only six of the 17 Autonomous Communities had received decision-making power and funding. These six had developed in a relatively short time surprisingly effective organization and management structures to run their educational systems. The historic territories, especially Catalonia, have a long tradition of creativity and efficiency in administrative affairs.

It should be noted, however, that as the six Autonomous Communities have employed several hundred administrative personnel and

absorbed virtually all of the educational functions, there has been no commensurate reduction in the Ministry of Education. Rather, the staff and structure has continued to grow.[40] Bureaucracies were thus expanding at regional and national levels.

In all 17 Autonomous Communities the secretariats of education had organized their administrative units generally along the same lines as those found in the MEC. However, in the six Autonomous Communities with delegated authority, the regional educational officials no longer reported to the MEC. In the 11 Autonomous Communities still waiting for the mandatory five-year waiting period to pass, the Ministry of Education continued to exercise centralized control over educational affairs through its old administrative structures of Delegaciónes Provinciales still existing in the provinces. "We don't consider that the secretariats of education even exist in the Autonomous Communities that have not yet received their competencias," a top MEC official observed in an interview. These 11 regional secretariats still have few duties, a minimal budget and almost no power.

Coordination and Planning

When considering administrative change, increased funding and effective administrative infrastructures are important; but as Escudero pointed out earlier, the key to success in a regionalized and decentralized educational system is cohesive planning and coordinated activity between the national and regional governments.[41] Certainly, one form of establishing and enforcing planned and coordinated national and regional educational actions would be through the political structure that undergirds the structure of government.

Gonzáles-Anleo writes that the "the visible and official center of

State educational power is the Ministry of Education, but the real power is in the hands of the government in its totality and the political party that places its people in positions of power."[50] Since 1983 the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), or Spanish Socialist Workers Party, has held an absolute majority in both houses of the national parliament. Leading up to the Autonomous Community elections of 1987, the PSOE also held a majority in 12 of the 17 parliaments of the Autonomous Communities.

However, the three historic territories were politically controlled by other parties. National\regional planned and coordinated actions, therefore, were not possible by exercising control through political party machinery. Coordinated efforts would have to come through the interactions of the bureaucratic structures at both levels.

Ten years after the regionalization reform began, coordinated educational planning encompassing the MEC and the six Autonomous Communities with delegated authority practically did not exist. There are several reasons why. During the Franco years, for example, national planning was viewed as a tool of authoritarian control. In the post-Franco era, the office of national educational planning was abolished until 1987 when a one-person office of educational planning was reestablished. Senior MEC officials reported that any attempt to develop plans that impacted on the historic territories would be looked upon by the territories as a hostile attempt to intervene in their newly gained regional autonomy.

Coordinated actions between the six regional educational systems and the MEC were also noticeably absent. The only formalized mechanism to structure national/regional interactions is the required

Sectoral Coordination Conference between the Minister of Education and the various secretariats of education. At least twice a year conferences are held to "exchange points of view and examine common problems and the solutions proposed to settle them"[21] Most of the coordination efforts, however, are based on periodic personal contact as officials at national and regional levels attempt to organize their actions on an ad hoc basis.

A long-standing distrust is at the root of the difficulty in establishing close working relationships between the regional educational officials in the historic territories and the national officials. In the historic territories there are deeply seeded anxieties that the national government might once again move to stamp out regional, political and cultural identities. The specter of the past lives on in their minds. In Madrid the anxiety is that the historic territories will one day mobilize in a true effort to establish their independence from Spain.

The tension between the educational leaders at the national level and those in the historic territories is visible in their analyses of the division of authority. The MEC officials in their interviews typically pointed to all the decision-making power the regions have now that they did not possess prior to the new Constitution. Most often mentioned was the authority to establish bilingual instructional programs, manage the educational budget and hire administrative personnel.

The regional educational officials, on the other hand, point to all they could do if the Ministry would leave them alone. Forceful arguments were made in the interviews that the degree of power delegated to regional secretariats of education looks good on paper

but in reality it is minimal.

The hiring of teachers, for example, is still centralized and based on a national testing programs with high scoring teachers getting preference for openings. Also, over 80 percent of the education budget is in fixed costs leaving very little to use for regional programs. The Constitutional "minimums" that must be part of all educational programs in Spain were often referred to as "maximums," that leave precious little time for regional curricular materials. [Interestingly enough, local officials make the same charge against regional officials that the regional officials make against the MEC. Any power that has been delegated to regional levels has not been delegated to local levels.]

In short, what limited regional authority that does exist, the argument goes, is generally focused on carrying out educational policies and following rules made in Madrid. Speaking metaphorically, the Ministry personnel typically view the glass as half full, and the educational officials in the historic regions view it as half empty.

An interesting point on the degree of communication, or perhaps miscommunication, between the MEC and the Catalonia Secretariate came in an interview with the senior Catalonian official for program development. He argued emphatically that it would not be possible to modify the established MEC instructional program outside the approved national framework because the MEC would withhold granting graduation degrees to the students involved. When queried as to how many proposals for change representing regional interests (economic, social, technical) had been submitted to the Ministry, he replied "none."

Shortly thereafter, the MEC official responsible for review...

proposals for variance to the national framework was asked how frequently such requests from the historic territories crossed his desk. His response was that such proposals would be welcomed by the MEC but almost never arrive. From time to time an individual teacher who wants to develop an experimental activity in his class or in a school does submit such a request.

Aside from the area of bilingual instruction, ten years after the decentralization reform began the historic territories had not yet developed substantive policies that would highlight regional uniqueness.

Considering the fact that the Ministry of Education in recent years have made numerous significant changes in the structure of educational governance as well as the content of educational programs, the question becomes: how have these changes taken place outside the context of national\regional planning and technical coordination between bureaucracies?

During the 1960s the Ministry of Education turned to a form of "national debate" on proposed policy changes that would impact on the regional educational systems. Widely publicized open hearings are held in which parents, students, teachers, newspaper reporters, members of parliament, business personnel and interested citizens participate with vigor. Students often carry their view to the streets through massive, and sometimes destructive, demonstrations.

The 1987 proposal to revise significantly the instructional programs of primary, secondary and vocational education in the regions is an interesting example because it "requires close collaboration between the Autonomous Communities and the MEC" and "it cannot be carried out satisfactorily without ample dialogue and the maximum

consensus possible between the segments of society involved."[*]

Hammering out compromises through the mechanism of national debate identifies the proposed changes with "Spain" and not the institutional bureaucracies of the central government. The autonomous communities of the historic territories are absorbed into a nation-wide movement. These efforts toward negotiated national consensus have proven considerably more acceptable to the regions that jealously guard their quasi-autonomy than techniques involving more direct intervention. The Spanish approach to policy changes that impact on the decentralized regions is slow, inefficient, often out of control (and in the streets), but it appears particularly suited to a new democratic order that is still feeling its way.

The Development Dilemma: 1987

Ten years after the passage of the new Constitution, the development dilemma remained. Should the central government decentralize power and resources to the remaining 11 Autonomous Communities, or should the central government continue to control these artificially created regions? The mandatory five-year waiting period for most of them was almost over.

Conditions had somewhat changed. For the public outside the historic territories, the euphoria which had surrounded the regionalization movement had passed. Democracy in Spain was now an established fact, and it was no longer linked to regionalization. The Army remained in the barracks and gave no hint at discontent.

Economically, worrisome debts through deficit spending had been piling up in the regions that had already received delegated power.[*] Questions were being raised as to whether there is economic "justification for this reproduction of the State administrative model

in each of the 17 Autonomous Communities with all its abusive bureaucratic vices."[54]

The "it cost too much" argument is countered by academics as Miguel Beltrán who argue that public expenditures (and public service) in Spain were far below the rest of Europe during the Franco years and only now are just beginning to catch up.[55] Comparing the 19 OCDE industrialized nations on public expenditures as a percent of gross national product. Spain was last in 1965 and 11 percent below the mean. In 1982 Spain was 16th and six percent below the mean.[56]

The central government was concerned that if power were further decentralized, it would still be held responsible for national development but would no longer hold sufficient power to influence events beyond foreign policy, defense and national planning activities. In other words, to distribute authority and budget to the remaining 11 regions could fragment any chance of a unified effort toward national development.

The PSOE party which controlled the central government also had a politically motivated reason to suspend the decentralization process. The winter of 1987 was a winter of discontent in Spain which saw 21 percent unemployment, the highest in Europe.[57] Massive strikes in schools, universities, hospitals, airlines, transit and other institutions wracked the country. The PSOE party knew it would lose control over some of the 12 regional parliaments it then controlled. The PSOE decentralizing power and resources to other political parties at the regional level, if it could be avoided, would be an unpleasant experience.

In a quiet preemptive strike in April of 1987, two months before the Autonomous Community elections, the government announced it would

stop the decentralization process until the next presidential elections in 1990. The Constitution provides for but does not require the decentralization process to proceed. The announcement of the suspension did not engender enough excitement to reach the front pages of the nation's newspapers.

Publicly the PSOE dominated government argued that the 11 regional Autonomous Community governments were not yet sufficiently trained and organized to assume the responsibility of managing their own affairs. Privately they acknowledged that no training or management development programs had been established to assist the regions in the transition. No mention was made that the other six Autonomous Communities had made a very quick and effective transitions to power without the assistance of the central government.

The PSOE had assessed the situation correctly. In the June elections, the PSOE lost control over five more regional parliaments. As this study closed, the new controlling political parties in those regions had begun to demand the resumption of the decentralization process.

Conclusions and Implications

Those who speak of the "miracle of Spain" are perhaps drawing their conclusions too early in the drama, but what is visible thus far is certainly impressive [especially when compared with attempts of other nations].[9] The transition from autocratic to democratic government has been bridged by a Constitution that has not necessarily solved the "regional problem," but it certainly has made effective working compromises possible.

The following are principal keys to the success Spain has achieved.

Boundaries: The boundaries of the historic territories have been redesigned so that they once again encompass the cultural, linguistic and, to some extent, the legal traditions of the ancient kingdoms they once represented.

Law and Policy: Within the newly designed boundaries, legislative bodies have been formed with the power to make laws, establish regional policy, manage budgets and hire personnel.

Shared Decision Making: Through the Constitution and the regional statute agreements there is provision for a flexible framework governing the national-regional distribution of decision-making authority.

Incremental Change: The decentralization process has taken place in incremental stages rather than all regions at the same time.

Coordination: The "national debate" strategy has emerged as workable technique (although slow and conflict laden) to introducing change even in the quasi-autonomous regions.

Educational Finance: The funding of education has improved significantly in the 1980s.

The first 10 years of the regionalization and decentralization reform represent a good beginning rather than an end to the reform effort. Much remains to be done.

When (and if) all 17 regions receive their competencies, it remains to be seen whether they will act in the interest of the "one nation" concept or pursue their own objectives through their own means. Certainly, higher levels of trust between the national and regional governments of the historic regions will be required to establish the greater degrees of collaboration fundamental to continually promoting the "miracle of Spain."

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